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ABSTRACT

In support of the premise that a better understanding of the causes of poor student motivation may lead to the development of techniques to stop unmotivated students from dropping out of college, this paper reviews the literature on the nature of motivation among adolescents and factors influencing academic achievement. After introductory comments on the problem of underprepared and unmotivated community college students, the paper considers the following aspects of student motivation: (1) the educational attitudes and low level of involvement in learning of unmotivated students; (2) the incidence and causes of dropping out; and (3) the special motivational problems of underprepared students. Arguing that most unmotivated community college students experienced similar problems in high school, the paper then considers their attributes in terms of college entrance examination scores, knowledge level, courses, family characteristics, lack of involvement and motivation, and tendency to drop out of school. The next section reviews materials on motivation in adolescents, considering social influences, adolescent identity, locus of control, attributions for success or failure, academic goals, aspirations, deferred gratification, and academic self-concept. After reviewing students' reasons for attending college, the paper considers ways in which the high school environment and curriculum can be modified to enhance motivation; reviews research on single-sex high schools and boarding schools; and looks at ways the community environment and students' parents can influence motivation. Next, ways of increasing students' involvement in learning and raising their expectations are discussed. After suggesting that more attention be paid to the motivation of average students, the paper highlights teaching methods that can help motivate all students. A 58-item bibliography is included. (EJV)

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Motivating the Underprepared Unmotivated Community College Student

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Introduction: The problem of underprepared and unmotivated college students.

So many underprepared students appear in community college classrooms today. It's the only place those with low skills can begin their college education. Some of the underprepared students are highly motivated. They desperately want to succeed in college in order to have a rewarding future career. Often they are returning adults, laborers, women who have raised a family, or minorities. They may have had poor opportunities for a good high school education, or they may have simply been unmotivated during their high school years. But these highly motivated underprepared students have one thing in common: they want a better opportunity for success in life than they have had in the past. These underprepared students are not a problem. There are support systems for students who want them: remedial classes, counseling, and tutoring. Community colleges welcomes highly motivated students of any skill level.

However, there are many underprepared students who were unmotivated to learn in high school who continue to be unmotivated in the community college. These students are a heavy burden for the community college, and for the faculty members who try to teach them. Of course, there are some success stories -- the unmotivated underprepared student who suddenly gets a spark of interest which becomes a blaze of motivation which allows the student to be successful in completing college. But many more unmotivated students become statistics, contributing to the high dropout rates which are becoming an embarrassment to the community colleges.

Part of the problem is the fact that these students are not adequately prepared for college level work and it is simply too frustrating to continue. It is difficult to be motivated if it is impossible to keep up with the class. For those who are underprepared and unmotivated, the much greater problem of the two is motivation. Anyone who really wants to improve their skills can do it with motivation. But for those who are not motivated, there is little hope for success in college.

Related to this is another issue: What about the capable students who are also unmotivated? These are students who drop out of classes midway through the semester for various reasons: they suddenly have to work during the hours that the class meets, they attend class but never seem to find the time to do the outside required work, they have many other commitments and activities that seem to get in the way, or they may spend a great deal of time working on some classes but not others. This is natural. We always seem to be able to find time to do things for which we are rewarded, either with money or with personal satisfaction. Those activities which are rewarding have a higher priority than those which do not appear to be rewarding.

So motivation is the key issue for both underprepared students and capable students who drop out of classes and drop out of college. Motivation and skills are required to be successful in college. Skills can be obtained through remedial courses. Motivation may only occur within each

individual. This opens up a Pandora's box of questions: What kind of motivation might work to stimulate these unmotivated students? What might teachers do to help these students? Can anything be done for these students? Is this a waste of the teacher's time -- time that might be better spent on those who are already motivated? On the other hand, is it possible that some of those who drop out might become motivated if just one teacher provided some kind of motivational "spark"? If anything can be done for the unmotivated student, it must be a grassroots effort by teachers. All of the remedial programs and "college success" programs in the world cannot help if the students find their classes uninspiring and seemingly irrelevant.

First we need to learn more about the problem of the unmotivated, and sometimes underprepared, students who enter college. Possible solutions may be found through examining the nature of motivation in the adolescent period and by gaining a better understanding of the factors which motivate students to achieve or not to achieve at the high school level. Hopefully, this information will provide a better understanding of college student motivation which may be useful for those who teach unmotivated college students.

Thesis: Through a better understanding of the causes for lack of motivation in adolescent college students it may be possible to discover motivational techniques which might prevent these students from dropping out by causing these same students to become motivated to finish college.

I. The Problem

The symptoms of the problem of unmotivated and underprepared college students may be seen by first reviewing the unmotivated college students and then by looking the problems at the high school level: those who may soon become unmotivated, underprepared college students.

A. Unmotivated Underprepared College Students

As a full-time college instructor for eight years, I feel qualified to comment on my non-scientific, informal observation of a progression of events which occurs faithfully every semester. College students come to a crowded classroom at the beginning of each semester. As the semester progresses some students become more motivated and more excited about the subject matter, doing more work than the required assignments, and finishing the semester with a positive and rewarding learning experiences. However, as the semester progresses the opposite also happens. Some students don't allow sufficient time to do the required reading or outside assignments. This causes poor results on quizzes. As the level of achievement decreases, the students tend to find more reasons not to attend the class. Eventually the student drops the class. If this pattern occurs in several classes, the student is likely to drop out of college.

Successful completion of college

⬆

Successful completion of class

⬆

Good attendence in class

⬆

Achievement in class

⬆

Time spent on class increases

⬆

Motivation for class increases

⬆

Interest in class grows

⬆

Relevance in class

⬆

STUDENT STARTS COLLEGE

⬇

Lack of relevance in class

⬇

Lack of interest in class

⬇

Lack of motivation for classwork

⬇

Lack of time for classwork

⬇

Lack of achievement in class

⬇

Lack of attendence in class

⬇

Drop out of class

⬇

Drop out of college

Lack of motivation. College students who lack motivation may be characterized as those who are more interested in the advantages of having a college degree, such as better job opportunities and the likelyhood of making more money, than in the learning that takes place in the process of obtaining the college degree. For this reason, unmotivated students may be more interested in "beating the system" than in doing actual work. The unmotivated students may also believe that they should be rewarded for doing "something," whether or not the quality of the work is worthy of being rewarded. In addition, there may be a pronounced lack of interest in gaining knowledge in areas of deficiency (Klingelhofer & Hollander, 1973).

Lack of Involvement. Astin has a theory of involvement which is stated very simply: "Students learn by becoming involved" (1985, p. 133). Astin continues, "The amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement in that program" (p. 134). Education theorist Jerome Bruner argues that doing, trying, and testing come before we get interested. A high school teacher believes that "We get interested in what we get good at" (Welsh, 1986, p. 126). Involvement may cause success, and success may cause greater involvement. Unfortunately, the process also works in reverse: lack of involvement is likely to cause failure, and failure is likely to cause less involvement. It seems nearly impossible to stop this progression of events, as outlined in the chart, once it has started. Many students would rather drop the class than face the uphill battle of recovering from the previous failures in the class. Some students come back the next semester with a more realistic expectation of the amount of work which is required to be successful, but others do not return.

A factor which may contribute to the high drop out rates of community colleges and any commuter colleges is the fact that the lives of the students do not revolve around the college. College classes are only a small part of the lives of the commuter students who have work, family, and social committments outside of college (Tinto, 1987). Research on the effect of student involvement in college on student persistence shows that the amount of time students choose to spend on all aspects of college has a direct effect on their persistence in college (Astin, 1985, p. 144). However, community colleges are viewed by many students as a college of minimal commitment (Riesman, 1980). For this reason alone, uninvolved community college students may have a greater chance of dropping out than students in more involving college environments.

Dropping Out. The ultimate act in showing disinterest in college work is to drop out of college. Students who drop out generally report that they simply were not interested in their school or their studies. David Riesman describes these students as approaching community colleges tentatively: "They will give it a try, but, having already learned to dislike school and to mistrust

themselves as scholars, they are ready to take flight at the first sign of difficulty or defeat" (1980, p. 186). Some students report that they were interested when they started college, but their experiences in college had resulted in a loss of that initial interest and motivation (Tomlinson and Walberg, 1986). In Astin's study of college freshmen only .7 percent estimated that chances were very good that they will drop out of college permanently (Astin, 1988). Unfortunately, the actual college drop out rate is considerably higher. According to the U.S. Department of Education estimates for first-time enrollments, forty-five percent of those who enter college drop out without earning a degree. Of those who leave, the majority leave in the first year of college and three-quarters drop out in the first two years (Tinto, 1987, p. 21).

Innacurate Expectations. Why do students lose interest? Dale Parnell (1985) believes that the inaccurate expectations of entering college students may be a contributing factor. In a survey of 18,000 incoming college freshmen in 1982 and 1983, nearly all of the entering freshmen said they expected to earn a B average or better in college. But over sixty percent of the students surveyed stated that they planned to study fewer than twenty hours per week. Over eighty percent of the students knew little or nothing about the major they had chosen (Parnell, 1985, p. 109).

By the time students graduate from high school they have spent an average of 5,000 more hours watching television than sitting in the classroom. Television has been accused of shortening the attention span and of changing the expectations of students: they expect the process of acquiring information to be fast and easy (Welsh, 1986, p. 120). According to these reports, entering college students do not realize how great the time committment is for college level study. It is considerably greater than the amount of time they may have spent in preparing for their high school classes. This misconception alone may cause sufficient frustration for a student to lose interest in college work.

The Underprepared Students. The frustration increases for the undeprepared students who never learned the academic skills required for college work. In addition to low ability, as measured by grade point average in high school and by achievement tests, they may not know how to organize their time, take notes in class, take tests, or settle down and work (Klingelhofer and Hollander, 1973). Cross described the "New Students" as "Young people who have not considered college in the past but who are newly entering college in the 1970's," and are "distinguished more by low test scores than by any other measure available, including race, sex, and socioeconomic status" (1972, p. 25). Underprepared college students are not from any one race or income level. There are many white middle class college students in suburban areas who were not motivated to do the required work in high school, and are now underprepared for college work.

Astin explains the problem of academic motivation in underprepared students: ". . . since

they have not yet developed their learning skills to the point where academic work is intrinsically rewarding, their motivation is often marginal" (1985, p. 106). A common phrase used by underprepared students when talking about the books they must read for classes: "It's boring." According to teachers who hear this phrase frequently, this is a code phrase for "I can't read it" (Welsh, 1986, p. 4).

Estimates of entering college students who are deficient in reading and writing skills range from thirty to forty percent of all entering college students, and aproximately twenty-five percent of all entering college students take remedial courses in math, writing, or reading (Tinto, 1987, p. 52). These statistics are generally higher for public community colleges. Middlesex County College, a two-year college in a middle class suburban community in New Jersey, provides basic skills instruction to sixty-five percent of entering freshmen. The number of students requiring remediation has increased by forty percent in the last five years (Edwards, 1986, p. 34). San Joaquin Delta College in California assessed their entering students in Fall of 1984 and 1985. Twenty-five percent of the students were found to have reading and writing skills below the ninth grade level, and forty-six percent were able to read and write at high school level. Only twenty-four percent were prepared for college level reading and writing. Math scores were somewhat lower: thirty percent scored at lower than ninth grade level, sixty percent scored at high school level, and only ten percent were prepared for college level math classes (California Association of Community Colleges, 1985, p.1). Other community colleges around the country have similar statistics.

Many entering college students are aware of their own deficiencies. In Astin's annual report on college freshmen of 1983 over twenty percent of the freshmen surveyed said that one of the reasons which was "very important in deciding to go to college" was "To improve reading and study skills." That figure had doubled in twelve years (Astin, 1985). In Astin's 1988 report on freshmen double the percentage of five years ago, nearly forty percent, said that they need to improve their reading and study skills in college (Astin, 1988).

B. Unmotivated Underprepared High School Students

In most cases, the underprepared unmotivated college students were also unmotivated, low achieving high school students. The attributes of these students are similar to those of the underprepared unmotivated college students. But because they are slightly younger, the role of the family and the community may play a larger role for these students.

College Entrance Examination Scores. One of the most commonly referred to indicators of a lack of high school achievement is the low college entrance examination scores. A Nation at Risk

(The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) stated, "The average achievement of high school students on most standardized tests is now lower than 26 years ago when Sputnik was launched" (p. 8). In addition, "The College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT) demonstrate a virtually unbroken decline from 1963 to 1980. Average verbal scores fell over 50 points and average mathematics scores dropped nearly 40 points" (p. 9). Nationally, the SAT scores have remained the same from 1986 to 1987, at 906 points of a possible 1600 (Hirschorn, 1988).

However, it is important to point out that a higher proportion of high school seniors are taking the exams than in the past: in 1987 nearly forty-one percent of high school seniors were tested, about ten percent more than the thirty-one percent of seniors who were tested in 1977. Despite the higher proportion of lower-ability students taking the test in 1987, the overall scores in 1977 were slightly lower (Noah, 1988, p. 59). This may show that students are learning more, or it may indicate that schools are "teaching to the test" more to meet the needs of the increased number of students who wish to take the college entrance exams.

It is also interesting to note that the greatest losses in test scores have been at the higher levels: from 1972 to 1981 the proportion of test-takers scoring in the 600-800 range on the verbal portion fell from 11.4 percent to 7 percent, and on the math portion from 17.8 percent to 14.5 percent (Honig, 1985, p. 55). Bill Honig concludes that the decrease in the ranks of the high achievers has been caused by a lack of ability to analyze and to draw inferences. In other words, many high school students lack the critical thinking skills necessary to gain high scores.

Research on High Schools. A concern for the quality of the high schools was shown by the number of reports and studies which were published in the early 1980's. Nine major report discussed the problems of low high school achievement: The Paideia Proposal by Mortimer Adler (1982); A Nation at Risk (1983); Making the Grade, a report by the Twentieth Century Fund; Academic Preparation for College by the College Board; Action for Excellence by the Education Commission of the States (ECS); A Study of High Schools by Theodore R. Sizer; Educating Americans for the 21st Century by the National Science Board Commission of Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science, and Technology; and High School by Ernest Boyer (Spady & Marx, 1984, p. 7). All of these reports offered suggestions for the improvement of high school curriculum. Another report, The Nation Responds (United States Department of Education, 1984), offered examples of the changes in curriculum and educational standards which were made by individual states in response to A Nation at Risk.

Underprepared High School Students. College entrance test scores and high school grades may not necessarily be the best indicators of high school achievement. The more important questions is, "What do they know?" Recently, a study titled What do our 17-year-olds know?

(Ravitch & Finn, 1987) attempted to answer this question by assessing the general knowledge of history and literature among high school juniors. The results were disturbing: only 32.2 percent could identify 1850-1900 as the period in which the Civil War occurred (p. 49); only 24.7 percent knew that Abraham Lincoln was president between 1860 and 1880 (p. 269); only 35.5 percent knew that the novel 1984 was about a dictatorship which stamps out individuality (p. 275) ; and only 33.4 percent knew the Biblical story of why Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed (p. 276). The average scores were fairly low: 54.5 percent on the history questions (p. 46), and 51.8 percent on the literature questions (p. 85). The tone of the book is negative, but the authors explain, "Another way to characterize the results, however, is in the terms traditionally used by teachers: a score of less than 60 percent is failing" (p. 1).

High School Curriculum It is important to realize that high school students should not receive all of the blame for the lowered test scores and lower levels of general knowledge. The high schools must share some of the blame for the changes in curriculum which caused a deemphasis of the traditional subjects which are still associated with a "well-educated" high school graduate. Many public high schools loosened the academic curriculum between 1972 and 1980. Students were required to take fewer courses in foreign languages and science. In addition, fewer students took the "academic track" for high school graduation: 45.7 percent of seniors in 1972 were in the academic track, but 38.1 percent of seniors in 1980 were in the academic track (Pine, 1985, p. 12).

Changes in the Family. The breakup of the "traditional" family and the increase in working mothers have been blamed for a lower level of high school achievement. The divorce rate was stable from 1860 to 1960, with about thirty to thirty-five divorces per thousand marriages. Today, about one third of all American children will experience the divorce of their parents. At the same time, the percentage of working mothers increased from 32 percent in 1960 to 56 percent in 1981 (Tomlinson & Walberg, p. 304). For these two reasons, parents have less time to spend with their children to reinforce their learning by discussing school events each day. Parents may not always be home to encourage their children to study or to read for pleasure. Moreover, both parents are likely to devote have large amounts of their interests and energies to their careers, with little time or energy remaining for active involvement in the child's schooling (Coleman, 1987).

According to Coleman, there are two types of family problems which are likely to have a negative impact on school achievement: the "disadvantaged" families from lower socioeconomic groups, and the "deficient" families which are a result of divorce or two income families. Coleman describes the problems of the "deficient" families: "The functional deficiencies lie in the increased

self-interest of parents, the decreased personal investment in activities of the family as a unit, and the decreased parental involvement with the children. . . . The major indicators of functional deficiency as it affects acquisition of cognitive skills is the question of how often the child talks to mother or father, and whether the parents hold expectations for the child's going to college" (p. 119). Coleman expresses concern that the needs of the children coming from an increasing number of disadvantaged and deficient families may need to be met by a different type of school which acts on behalf of the family and provides greater support for the students.

Lack of involvement. The distractions for commuting college students are quite similar to the distractions which keep high school students from doing their school work. The influence of part-time jobs, time with peers, and time spent with media (television, radio, and records) exceed the influence of school on the lives of high school students (Welsh, 1986, p. 6). The "High School and Beyond" data showed that high school students spent an average of four to five hours per week doing homework, but an average of 28 hours per week watching television (Tomlinson & Walberg, 1986, p. 303). Astin's 1987 study asked college freshmen which activities they had spent six hours or more per week during their high school senior year. Eighty percent socialized with friends, 64 percent worked, 48 percent participated in sports, 43 percent did homework, and nearly 40 percent partied for six hours or more each week (1988, p. A35). A side effect of the increased hours spent working is the creation of a premature affluence among adolescents. Clothing, cars, and entertainment take precedence over school and cause school to become even more irrelevant (Welsh, 1986, p. 121).

In some cases these distractions or a lack of interest in school because of the outside activities may result in absences from school. Coleman found that students with greater absenses were more likely to drop out. For students with five to fifteen absences in the fall semester of their sophomore year the dropout rate was 28.3 percent. But for students with sixteen or more absences the dropout rate skyrocketed to 56.4 percent (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, p. 104). In addition, poor grades have a high impact on the dropout rate. Thirty-seven percent of students with a grade average below "C" dropped out of high school (p. 105).

Dropping out. As with college students, dropping out of school is the ultimate act of a high school student who is frustrated with poor achievement or bored with school. Each year 850,000 students drop out of school (Editorial Research Reports, 1985, p. 87). However, the dropout rate has remained at aproximately 25 percent over the past fifteen years (Coleman, 1987, p. 96). A 1982 study was done by the Educational Testing Service used the "High School and Beyond" data to construct a profile of the high school students who drop out. According to the study, dropouts are more likely than other students to have the following attributes: low test scores, low grades, less

homework completed, low self-esteem, less sense of control over their lives, more disciplinary problems in school, more frequent dating, more time spent driving around, and parents who were less likely to know what the students were doing. The following reasons were given by former high school students for dropping out: 33 percent did not like school, 33 percent had poor grades, 20 percent chose to work, 18 percent got married, 16 percent didn't get along with teachers, and 25 percent of female dropouts were pregnant (Pine, 1985, pp. 63-64). The tragedy is that nearly twenty percent of the dropouts were very bright, with I.Q.'s over 120 (Honig, 1985, p. 73), but they dropped out because they were bored with school.

Lack of motivation. The problem of the unmotivated underprepared high school student is one of the most frustrating problems facing high school teachers. In Ernest Boyer's study, High School (1983), teachers are quoted as saying that many of today's students "don't like to study anymore," "aren't interested in learning," "won't do homework," "don't seem to care about school" (p. 162). One teacher says, "My major problem is how to motivate students who don't care about themselves. And my biggest frustration is their 'what's the difference' attitude" (p. 163). English teacher Patrick Welsh says, "I had been trained to work with students who could read. When required to teach ones who couldn't, I felt like a failure. I was angry at a system that pretended that these kids belonged in a twelfth grade classroom" (Welsh, 1986, p. 4).

II. Motivation in Adolescents

In his 1913 publication titled Interest and Effort in Education, John Dewey has some profound observations on the level of interest which is necessary for education. He said "To be interested in any matter is to be actively concerned with it. . . . Interest is dynamic. . . . Interest is personal; it signifies a direct concern; a recognition of something at stake, something whose outcome is important to the individual" (p. 16). How can students gain this level of interest? Dewey believed "anything indifferent or repellent becomes of interest when seen as a means to an end already commanding attention" (p. 25). In other words, students may be motivated by showing them the relevence of academic success to an aspect of their lives which is important to them.

There are two types of motivation: motivation to achieve success and motivation to avoid failure (Nygaard, 1977). The various factors which influence motivation in adolescents will be examined to gain a better understanding of the differences in the levels of motivation, and the differences of academic achievement levels in high school students.

Influences of society on motivation. David Riesman, in The Lonely Crowd (1961), describes three different personality types: the tradition-directed, the inner-directed, and the other-directed. The tradition-directed person is bound to the traditions of his culture, and is

motivated to behave in certain ways to avoid shame. The inner-directed person has an internal "psychic gyroscope" which motivates him to actions that he intrinsically believes are correct, even when social approval is not available. Inner-directed persons who do not follow their inner feelings may feel guilty. The other-directed person is more externally motivated and is more easily influenced by peers. Without the feedback of others, the other-directed is likely to become anxious (pp. 24-25). On the American frontier, in rural agricultural societies, or earlier this century in small entrepreneurial businesses there were a greater number of inner-directed people, because the society encouraged individual activities and individual achievement. According to Riesman, the service economy in which people work primarily with other people is an "other-directed" type of society. There are greater numbers of people today who are other-directed because the ability to work with other people, to influence and be influenced by other people, is encouraged (Riesman, 1961). Marshall McLuhan (1964) noted that the proliferation of the electronic mass media is creating a "tribal" culture in which people are more easily influenced by their peers than are those of the disappearing "literate" culture. The cultural and social changes of the recent years may affect the students who have recently been entering college by influencing them to be more other-directed, and more influenced by their peers. According to Riesman and McLuhan's theories, college students of today are more likely to be motivated by external factors than by internal factors.

Adolescence is a time in which authority figures are rejected and peers become more important. "Teens are drawn together as people who can understand one another within their own subculture. . ." (Mouton, 1984, p. 4). Mouton advocates taking advantage of the motivation provided by peers through colleague teaching.

Adolescent Identity and Motivation. James Marcia describes two types of adolescent personalities: "foreclosures" who are attending college because of parental pressure, and "identity diffusion" who have no set occupational or ideological direction. These two groups, which may be predominant among entering community college students, have lower motivation for college persistence than other groups of adolescents who have a more well-defined identity. External factors are more important to these two types. They may leave college because of negative external pressure, such as poor grades. They have lower self-esteem than other groups, and they are not self-directed individuals. Both groups respond negatively to difficulties with challenging cognitive tasks (Marcia, 1980).

Internal and external locus of control. Internal locus of control can be seen in those who believe that they have control over how well they do, and external locus of control may be seen in those who believe their success is not within their control (Roueche & Mink, 1976). In a 1978

study, third through sixth grade students were asked "Do you think you do well in school because of hard work or luck?" The students in highly rated academic schools responded that "hard work" resulted in good grades. However, students in poorer schools tended to say that "luck" played a large role in how well they did (Austin, 1986, p. 74). Even by the third grade, children who believe that they have low ability will also believe that no matter how hard they work, success is out of their control! High school students are affected by their earlier experiences in school in which their beliefs about their abilities were established.

But those who believe they can do better if they work harder also believe that they have control over how well they do: their success is not dependent on outside factors. Teachers and counselors may change this attitude from "I can't do this no matter how hard I try because I'm just not smart enough" to "I can do it if I try because I know I'm smart enough" (Tomlinson & Walberg, 1986, p. 202). A study of college students who attended help sessions prior to a major exam showed that the majority of the students seeking help knew that they had done poorly in the past, but believed that they had the ability to improve their performance through attending the help sessions (Ames & Lau, 1982).

Attributions for success or failure. Are students motivated by the possiblity of success or by the desire to avoid failure? A study of high school students revealed two interesting outcomes: 1) Students who feel that they have high ability feel greater pride for success and greater shame for failure than those who do not attribute high ability for the outcome of their work; and 2) High ability is more closely linked to high self-esteem than is effort (Brown & Weiner, 1984). In addition, Brown and Weiner discovered that students prefer to have others attribute lack of effort to their failure rather than lack of ability, because a lack of ability results in public humiliation whereas a lack of effort results only in guilt. Teachers who wish to increase the self esteem of their students may want to attribute the cause for failure to low effort rather than low ability, unless the student has serious learning disabilities. This may help to motivate the students to try harder next time.

Clear Academic Goals. Research on college persistence has shown that students who have clear educational and occupational goals for themselves are more likely to finish college. In fact, according to researchers Cope and Hannah, "committment to either an academic or occupational goal is the single most important determinant of persistence in college" (Tinto, 1987, p. 46). Students who have a strong commitment to an academic goal that they believe is attainable are much more likely to keep going even under adverse conditions, whereas students with a weak commitment or an unrealistic or very modest goal are likely to drop out at the first sign of stress.

Student Aspirations. Some underprepared college students may have unrealistic aspirations

which are actually fantasies rather than concrete goals and expectations. According to Pat Cross, the reason for the unrealistically high goals may be a fear of failure (Klingelhoffer & Hollander, 1973, p. 62). A low-achieving student who claims he wants to be a doctor, or a television talk-show host, or the next Bruce Springsteen is not likely to be disappointed when this fantasy does not come true. Another study of low-ability two-year college students in California showed that their career aspirations were the same as the higher-ability students. Apparently peer influence was an important factor in determining these aspirations: unrealistic aspirations for low-achievers but realistic aspirations for higher achieving students (p. 63). It is important for these students with unrealistic aspirations to receive some help from a counselor or teacher to determine some short-term attainable goals which may lead to an attainable career aspiration.

Deferred Gratification. What motivates students to go to a job which pays four dollars per hour when they get called in at the last minute, despite the fact that going to the job will mean missing classes? Many studies have shown that underprepared students are more likely to want immediate gratification rather than deferred gratification, even if the immediate gratification is small (Klingelhoffer & Hollander, 1973, p. 73). The more highly motivated students are also likely to be more future-oriented: willing to delay present satisfaction for future rewards.

Academic Self-Concept. Students who do well in school have high "academic self concepts." The level of the academic self concept depends on how well he has done in school (Rosenberg, 1979). These beliefs of high ability or low ability are carried with the students into high school. Students of academically elite private high schools generally have a high opinion of themselves, in addition to a high academic self concept. In a survey of entering students they rated themselves as above average in the following five traits: common sense, general imagination, ability to make friends, self-discipline, and academic ability (Baird, 1977, p. 13). Another study of Korean students, however, showed that the high achievers had a high academic self concept, but not necessarily a high self concept (Song & Hattie, 1984).

Self-esteem was considered very important in the "Power of Positive Students" project of Sumter County, South Carolina, and Allegany County, Maryland. Three principles were adopted in this project: "A child's sense of self-worth is highly related to his achievement in school and other areas; positive self-esteem can be taught; and the responsibility for teaching it lies woth both the parents and educators, both at home and in school" (Mitchell, 1985, p. 56). The results of the "Power of Positive Students" project were very positive. Attendence in Allegany County averaged 94.5 percent, which compared to a state average of 91 percent. Student suspensions dropped from 501 suspensions in 1981 to 410 in 1984. The percentage of ninth grade students who graduate from high school four years later reached 93.8 percent in 1984 (p. 184).

Competition versus Mastery Learning. In a study of student motivation and academic achievement mastery learning with opportunities for retesting was shown to cause greater achievement than a competitive learning situation (Covington & Omelich, 1984). Low ability students particularly do well in a learning environment which emphasizes mastery learning (Tomlinson & Walberg, 1986). The higher level of achievement in the mastery learning situation appeared to be caused by a higher level of persistence and a greater amount of time spent in learning the task. In addition, those with low ability tended to persist in mastery learning despite repeated failures because they believed that they could eventually reach their goals or show improvement.

The differences in competitive learning and mastery learning involves different motivations. The competitive situation causes students to ask "Am I smart enough?" and "Can I do this?" Students with low academic self-concept are likely to lack the confidence in their ability to participate well in a competitive learning situation. Mastery learning is much more individualistic. Students may ask themselves "Am I trying hard enough?" and "How can I do this?" The motivations of the students differ due to academic self concept, and due to the differences between mastery learning and competitive learning environments (Ames & Ames, 1984).

III. Possible Solutions

It is truly depressing to review the evidence of widespread unmotivated underprepared high school and college students. Having examined the evidence, and the factors influencing motivation, it will now be possible to look at the positive side of the issue to attempt to find some solutions. The motivation for attending college and the attributes of high school achievers and factors which contribute to their achievement will be examined. Hopefully, this will lead to some ideas or methods which may be used by college teachers to motivate students.

Motivation to attend college. Many of the unmotivated students are in college for negative reasons: to avoid a future of hard labor and financial insecurity, or to give in to parental pressure to attend college (Tomlinson & Walberg, 1986, p. 166). In the annual report on 1987 college freshmen compiled by Astin, the freshmen gave the following "reasons noted as very important in deciding to go to college": over 82 percent said "to be able to get a better job;" over 72 percent wanted "to learn more about things;" over 71 percent said "to be able to make more money;" and over 60 percent said "to gain general education." Relatively few responded with negative responses: 2.5 percent said that they had "nothing better to do;" 3.2 percent said they "could not find a job;" and over 17 percent gave "parents wishes" as a very important reason for deciding to go to college (Astin, 1988, p. A35). Astin's report is somewhat more positive, although it is

possible that students did not want to admit the parental pressure for attending college. In both studies there is strong evidence for career motivation.

A survey of college expectations showed that 57.4 percent of public high school ninth grade students planned to go to college (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, p. 33). Interestingly, 57.4 percent of the public high school students who completed the academic program were enrolled in four year colleges two years later (p. 154). The total percentage of public high school graduates who were enrolled in two or four year college two years later was 42.1 percent of the male students, and 46.6 percent of the female students (p. 162). Predictably, those who finished an academic program in high school were more likely to continue to college, and were more likely to be enrolled two years later.

The High School Environment. High school students become motivated to achieve when the high school environment is filled with other students who are motivated. Tomlinson and Walberg explain, "it is easier to obtain high quality in schools where there is a sufficient number of interested and aggressive students who keep up the level of discourse, who do the work assigned, and who have parents asking about grades and teachers preparing classes carefully and handing back work on time" (1986, p. 149). A large percentage of the student body enrolled in the academic curriculum, rather than the general or vocational curriculum, creates a more stimulating academic environment. The students perceive the high quality of their high school, and respond by doing higher quality work (Pine, 1985).

One example of such a high school is described in Perrone's Portraits of High Schools (1985). "Brette High School" is a public academic magnet high school which attracts a student body with a singular goal: gaining admission to a good college. The motivation for choosing classes and even for participating in extracurricular activities is "it will look good on the transcript" (p. 576). But some students and faculty complain that the overemphasis on grades, test scores, and transcripts can cause the educational experience to be somewhat superficial for students who are overly concerned. However, the environment is a positive one which encourages achievement through high expectations and competition. One student commented, "Brette is what you make it. You have to put a lot of yourself into it" (p. 570). Another student commented on the difference between Brette and other high schools: "Here you walk into a classroom and everybody there is ready to study. In other schools you go in there and you intend to mess around and the teacher has to put you in control. That's what's made this school so good" (p. 573). One of the reasons the environment at Brette is quite different from other public high schools is the fact that students must earn the privilege of attending Brette through excellent grades in Junior High School, and through high scores on standardized tests. Students in other high schools may feel that they have to

be there, but the Brette students feel fortunate to be there.

The California State Department of Education has established six "quality indicators" for high schools: increased enrollment in academic courses, improved statewide test scores, reductions in dropout rate and improved attendence, improved performance of college bound students on SAT and Advanced Placement exams, and increased amounts and quality of homework and writing (Pine, 1985, p. 58). High schools can help to create an environment of academic excellence by setting clear academic goals. When these goals are reinforced by administrators, teachers, parents, and other students, the student motivation may increase so that the schools become similar to those excellent high schools which have been described.

Having a critical mass of motivated, high-achieving students also creates a greater pressure for success on those who may not be so highly motivated. Several students who had previously attended public schools commented on the role of peer pressure in their higher level of achievement in private schools. One student said, "If people around you are not working, are not doing their homework, you feel, 'Why should I?'" But in the private school "I feel you've got to keep up with your peers, since everyone else is working." Another student had similar comments: "the competition [at the public high school] is to see how little you can do; here it's to see how good you can do" (Powell et al., 1985, p. 202). Many students say that the positive peer pressure has a greater effect on their motivation than the motivation provided by teachers.

It is important to note that simply attending a private school may not be the only factor in raising academic achievement. In the Ravitch & Finn report, What Do Our 17-year-olds Know?, the average scores for private school students was only slightly higher than the average scores for public school students. The margin became even smaller when average scores of college bound public high school students were compared with the average private school scores. On the literature exams, college bound public high school students scored an average of 57 percent, and private school students scored 60 percent. The history scores were similar: public high school students scored an average of 60 percent, and private high school students scored 63 percent (Okun, 1988).

Parents who send their children to private high schools may assume that all private high schools provide a substantially better education than the public schools. According to this study, that may not necessarily be true. Coleman's 1982 report on high school achievement emphasized that the schools are responsible for the achievement of the students through providing an environment which is conducive to learning: "an orderly disciplinary environment, concerned teachers, and high levels of student homework" (Levy, 1986, p. 166; Coleman, Hoffer & Kilgore, 1982). The very positive academic environment of the excellent public and private high schools

may have a greater effect academic achievement than whether the school is public or private.

Single Sex Schools. A study which used the "High School and Beyond" data looked for advantages for the students who attend single sex high schools. Eighteen hundred randomly selected students of 75 Catholic high schools were compared. Forty-five were single sex high schools. Single sex schools were shown to provide advantages for their students in the following areas: academic achievement, achievement gains, educational aspirations, locus of control, sex role stereotyping, and attitudes and behaviors related to academics. Female students appeared to benefit even more than male students from attending single sex high schools. The explanation provided by the authors is that the single sex high schools provide a stronger academic environment in which social concerns are separated from academic concerns. However, the social implications of single sex high schools were not discussed in this study (Lee & Bryk, 1986).

The research done by Schneider and Coutts (1982) reinforces the idea that coeducational high schools promote more socializing than single sex schools. Students of four all-female and five all-male high schools were surveyed concerning their perceptions of coeducational high schools. According to these students of single-sex high schools, the coeducational high schools place greater emphasis on affiliation and nonacademic activities and less emphasis on control and discipline than the single sex schools. Another study of private high school students showed that students in both coeducational and single-sex private high schools perceived the single sex private high schools as being more academically oriented than coeducational private schools (Trickett et al., 1982). The perception of the students is an important attribute of the educational environment. According to the previously cited studies of high school environment, if students perceive the environment as one in which academics are very important they are likely to respond to that environment with higher levels of academic achievement.

Boarding Schools. Philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) believed that adolescent development is such an important period that parents are really not prepared to handle it effectively. He recommended sending the adolescent away to a rural environment to be educated and to have a chance to grow up (Cookson & Persell, 1985). Despite the fact that the home environment may not be the most beneficial for high school students from deficient or disadvantaged families, most parents prefer not to send their children away to school. However, those who decide that the needs of their children would be better served at a boarding school generally fall into two groups: those who want the very best possible education for their children at an elite boarding school, and those who have children with some kind of difficulty which might be better handled by experts in a special environment such as a school for the deaf, blind, mentally or physically disabled, emotionally disturbed, or delinquent (p. 33). Boarding schools provide a

total educational environment for students which, in deficient or disadvantaged families, may be a better learning environment than the home environment (Esty, 1974).

The prep schools with high academic standards also have very high admissions standards. Students must earn their way in through high grades in junior high school, good achievement test scores, and interviews (Cookson & Persell, 1985, p. 49). Similar to the students of public academic high schools, those who are able to gain entry to these elite schools feel fortunate to be there. Their motivation and academic achievement is likely to be considerably higher than the average high school student. The fact that prep school students have a high degree of self esteem, and a sense of control over their academic work (p. 63) probably contributes to their high achievement. Moreover, most students in the elite boarding schools have aspirations to attend "the right" college: preferably a prestigious Ivy League college (p. 167). The environment of the prep schools is one of high achievement and high aspirations.

High School Curriculum. Students in most public high schools tend not to choose the academic program. According to a 1980 study, the percentage of high school sophomores enrolled in an academic program was 35.7 percent in public high schools, 72.1 percent in Catholic high schools, 71.1 percent in other private high schools, and 97.5 percent in the high performance high schools students (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, p. 43). The overwhelming lack of a strong academic environment in many public high schools may prevent some of the positive effects on academic achievement which occur at the high schools with a strong academic environment.

There are differences between the intensity of the academic program in public schools and high performance private schools, particularly in the number of semesters of math and foreign language. Public high school students in the academic program take an average of 2.85 semesters of a foreign language, and high performance private high school students take 5.70 semesters. Public high school students in the academic program take 5.01 semesters of math, and high performance private high school students take 5.69 semesters of math. The total number of semesters of academic coursework varies widely between the high performance private schools and the public schools. The average number of semesters of academic coursework in the high performance high schools is 26.5, but among public high school students in the academic pgorgam the average is 23 semesters (p. 48). Apparently the students in the high performance high schools have greater opportunities and greater motivation to complete more academic coursework than the best of the public high school students who are enrolled in the academic program.

The high performance prep schools have considerably higher achievement on standardized tests than the public schools or other private schools. Some examples of tenth grade scores show the wide discrepency in achievement: vocabulary (21 possible) high performance 17.57, public

11.05; reading (19 possible) high performance 14.62, public 9.28; math (38 possible) high performance 30.8, public 19.14 (p. 65). These scores probably reflect the low enrollment in the academic program among most public high schools, and the high enrollment of the students in high performance private high schools in the academic program.

The academic performance of Catholic high school students has generally been better than students in public high schools and other private high schools, although the achievement levels are not as high as those of the high performance private high schools (p. 48). One of the reasons attributed to the relatively high achievement of Catholic high school students is the relatively inflexible curriculum. In the 1970's public high schools were changing their curriculum to provide greater options for the students. This was also called "watering down" the curriculum by critics of the changes. During this period, the Catholic high schools continued to offer the same basic curriculum and maintain high standards with strong support from parents (p. 94).

Students who come from the more rigorous academic environment of many private schools are more likely to persist in college because they are better prepared for the rigors of college work and are therefore less likely to drop out of college (Tinto, 1987, p. 52).

The Community Environment. Before 1980 a majority of Atlanta high school students were scoring below the national norms in reading and math. A campaign was started in 1980 which involved many in the community to bring up the achievement levels. The goal of reaching or exceeding national norms was met in 1984 by using these four assumptions: "students have to feel that people who are important to them believe in their goal; students have to see evidence that their efforts are worth while; students have to be given a chance to express their views; and students have to be challenged" (Welsh, 1986, p. 87). This large scale campaign showed the high school students that others cared about them, and everyone reinforced the same goal. The schools were able to impose greater academic demands on the students because they had the strong support of the adult community.

The community involvement shown in Atlanta is a phenomenon that James Coleman would call a "value community:" a community in which the same values are held and reinforced by a majority of the members of the community. In this instance, the universal value was a good education for the children of the community. Students who attend private academic high schools and private religious schools are a part of a value community: the religious values or educational values are reinforced by parents, other students' parents, other students, and teachers. Being a part of a "value community" has been shown to be more beneficial to high school achievement than being a part of the very diverse community of a public high school in which no one value usually takes precedence (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987).

Even more effective at promoting achievement in school is a "functional community:" a homogenous community in which generations of families have grown up together. Social norms and values arise out of the community and permeate the social environment. Adults whom children see outside of the home are closely linked to the family. Because of the social consistency there is value consistency. Most of the "functional communities" disappeared after the industrial revolution, but small towns still exist in rural parts of the country, and ethnic ghettos exist in large cities in which there is little mobility and considerable social consistency and value consistency through the generations (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). Coleman notes, "It may not be accidental that children of some of the most recent immigrant groups, not yet swallowed up by the dominant culture, and embedded within an ethnic functional community spanning generations, do very well in school" (p. 16). It is interesting that over the years many of the Westinghouse Science Talent Search winners have come from immigrant families. In the 1940's the winners were typically the children of Jewish immigrants, and today the competition is dominated by children of immigrant families from India, Taiwan, South Korea, and Vietnam (Lord et al., 1988).

This notion of the "functional community" may be applied to private Catholic schools, in which the local church provides a type of functional community: parents and adults in the church reinforce the same religious and academic values which are taught in the Catholic school. In Coleman's studies of private schools, he found that the Catholic high schools seemed to have some unique positive effects on the students that were not found in public high schools or in other private high schools. First, the dropout rate between sophomore and senior year was considerably lower: only 3.4 percent in Catholic schools, but 11.9 percent in other private high schools, and 14.4 percent in public high schools (Coleman, 1987, p. 99). In addition, Catholic schools appear to provide greater support for high risk students: those with high absenteeism, low grades, and discipline problems. The dropout rates for these students in considerably lower in Catholic high schools than in public high schools or other private high schools (p. 105). It is interesting that the achievement of the Catholic high school students who are of the Catholic faith is greater than the achievement of those attending Catholic high schools who are not of the Catholic faith (p. 137). Moreover, the achievement of students in Catholic high schools is higher than the achievement of students in high schools of other homogenous religious groups (p. 141). Apparently, the "functional community" effect provided by the Catholic high schools is not present for those not involved in the Catholic church, nor is it present in religious schools of other denominations.

Parental influence. Parents who send their children to private schools tend to have much higher levels of education than those who send their children to public schools, but their socio-economic status is only slightly higher: in 1980 the median income for parents of public

school children was $18,700; for parents sending their children to Catholic schools $22,700; and for parents sending their children to other private schools $24,300 (p. 30).

Parents of students in private schools tend to be more involved with the students' schoolwork than parents of public school students (p. 34). Parents of students in academic private high schools make their academic expectations clear to their children. According to a survey of students in private elite high schools, ninety percent of the students knew exactly what their parents expected of them academically: their parents expected them to stay in school, to learn to think for themselves, and to go on to college well-prepared for the academic rigors of college-level work (Baird, 1977, p. 17). Parents who choose to send their children to private schools are viewing the schools as an extention of the family "in loco parentis," according to Coleman (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, p. 3). More parents have been enrolling their children in private schools because they want to provide their children with a high quality education. In the western states between 1974 and 1984 public school enrollment fell 11 percent, while private enrollment rose 19 percent. A poll of parents revealed that more than half had considered sending their children to private schools (Sommer, 1984, p. 277), although only eleven percent of all children (elementary through high school) attend private schools (Levy, 1986, p. 85).

Parents may influence the achievement of their children through their expectations and involvement. Typically, the greater the educational level of the parents, the more value parents will place on the education of their children (Coleman, 1987, p. 31). A study which used the "High School and Beyond" data concluded that parental interest in schoolwork has a positive impact on the amount of time high school students spend doing homework. Increased homework time causes higher levels of achievement in high school (Keith et al., 1986; Keith, 1982)

Parents are generally concerned for the welfare of their children. However, they may not show the same amount of concern for the academic aspects of the child's life as they do for the social aspects. Some parents are very concerned about the parties their high school age children attend: the drinking and drugs, and the possibility of drunk driving. But, in many cases, these are the same parents who shrug off academic problems when contacted by high school teachers. Many parents do not know what courses their children are taking in high school(Powell, 1985)!

<u>High involvement</u>. High achievers are self-directed in their approach to outside schoolwork. The winners of the Westinghouse Science Talent Search are good examples of the self-directed, highly motivated, high achieving high school student. The winners worked in university medical labs and science labs: positions that they had to find on their own. The projects ranged from a computer analysis of Star Wars as a defense system to neurology research involving a drug used to prevent drug readdiction. One student gave some sound advice to other students: "If you're

interested in science, you have to read on your own and learn on your own"(Lord, 1988).

Both the normal homework and the exceptional projects described cause higher levels of students involvement. But in the classroom, students must also be involved to be successful. A study of the behavior of "controlling" teachers showed that teachers who talked more, were more critical of the students, gave more commands, and allowed less choice in student work caused students to be less involved in classroom activities. However, students who experience more autonomy in classes may become more involved due to increased self esteem and intrinsic motivation (Deci, et al, 1982).

Good study skills are developed by students who consistently spend time outside of class doing their homework. Students who are "successful studiers" have the following attributes: they possess a rich knowledge base, they know why they are studying, they use a variety of studying strategies, they pursue deep approaches to information processing, and they seek cues from instructors to establish their study goals (Thomas, 1986). Completion of homework contributes a great deal to the involvement of the students in their classes.

A high level of involvement is equally important for average high school students. In a study of urban high school students in a social studies class, students were asked to appraise their own personal ability and expectations for good grades. Students who had good attendence, completed assignment, felt involved during class, and had high teacher ratings of involvement had a higher assessment of their personal ability, and higher achievement in the class (Laffey, 1982).

Involvement in aspects of school other than academic involvement usually causes higher achievement. Because private schools are usually much smaller than public schools (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, p. 37), the students in private schools are generally more involved with activities outside of the classroom: student government, athletics, school plays, clubs, etc. (Baird, 1977; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987).

High Expectations. High expectations of the principal and department chairman are likely to cause higher student achievement (Austin & Garber, 1985). The school principal and other administrators can help to encourage an atmosphere of achievement by encouraging the teachers to have high expectations for their students.

Research on teacher expectations has proven that the higher the expectations of the teachers, the more likely the students are to meet those expectations. In a study conducted at Harvard by Robert Rosenthal, a group of students was selected randomly from an average class, but was identified to the teacher as a group of "exceptional" students. These students performed significantly higher than students of the same level in other classes (p.59). The teacher bolstered their self esteem by treating them as if they were superior students, and they lived up to the

expectation.

In another study of teacher expectations, biased teachers were shown to be likely to treat students that they were told were "low potential" students negatively, while treating the students who were supposedly "high potential" students more positively. The negative treatment by the teacher resulted in lower student achievement (Babad et al. 1982). Teachers tend to treat low-achieving students as a group rather than as individuals; they are smiled at less; teachers make less eye contact with lower-achieving students; they are called on less frequently to answer questions, and when they are called on they are generally given less time in which to answer the question; teachers are less likely to follow up on the answers given by low achieving students; the low-achievers are praised more often for marginal and inadequate answers; and they are interrupted more often by the teacher (Austin & Garber, 1985, p. 143). In other words, the average students tend to get less of the positive feedback that is more likely to be experienced by the higher achievers.

In two public selective academic high schools reviewed in Boyer's High School, the teachers view the students as the major asset to the school. Teachers have a tremendous amount of respect for the students, whom they characterize as being "teachable," "enthusiastic about learning," and "willing to invest long hours in study." The teachers are aware that many of the students have a long commute to school each day. The teams which observed these two high schools noted that unlike other high schools they had visited, students and faculty show a great deal of respect for each other. The indifference that was seen at other public high schools was not present in these two high schools. Both students and faculty took responsibility for the learning, and they all took pride in their schools (Perrone, 1985, p. 30). The student outcomes were positive: both schools had 95 percent average daily attendence, rather than the average 70 percent at other local area high schools, and one of the two schools sent 99 percent on to higher education (p. 567).

"Average" Students. One high school teacher put it well: "We do very much for the top students and the real problems, but for these average 'nice' kids with low motivation we don't do much of anything" (Powell et al., 1985, p. 173). Most students would rather do other things than schoolwork. The highly motivated students are able to motivate themselves to do the work, but average students may require somewhat more pressure from parents and teachers to do their schoolwork. One student of a private school said "if you remove the pressure, people just don't do as much. I know I wouldn't. I wouldn't work as hard." He realized that he needed to be pushed (p. 213). It is possible that these "average" students who need pressure to do the work in high school are the same ones who have difficulties in adjusting to the considerable autonomy of college classes. With the pressure removed in college classes these students may not do the required work

until they find some other intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, motivation for doing the work.

Teaching Methods. High achieving high school students know the attributes they like in a teacher. According to a Brette High School student, good teachers are the ones who "explain, help [students] to learn, challenge, make subjects understandable and interesting, trust the students, and communicate enthusiasm, interest, and knowledge" (Perrone, 1985, p. 596). Another student had some positive comments about his calculus teacher: "His lectures are clear. He drills well -- puts you on the spot -- motivates" (p. 597).

Students require clear academic goals, even for a single task in one college course. Some students are able to discern for themselves why a task is important, but often the teacher must explain how this particular task fits in with the goals of the course. Studies have shown that teachers who explain why the material is important and how it fits into the class before delivering it are likely to have better student achievement than teachers who are unclear in communicating their goals to the students (Austin & Garber, 1985; Brown and Weiler, 1984) In order to explain this to the student, the teacher must first have a clear idea of the desired outcomes for the students in the class (Austin & Garber, 1985, p. 128). Academic achievement usually reflects the performance goals set by the teacher (p. 143). If students have clear goals for each task, for each class, for the major, and for having a college education, they are likely to have a higher motivation for completing the task, the class, or their college education (Parnell, 1985).

A strategy for creating a learning situation which motivates students is suggested by Wlodkowski (1978). At the beginning of the learning period motivational factors are the student's attitude (toward the teacher, subject matter, and self) and the basic needs of the student at the time of learning. During the learning experience the student may be motivated through the stimulation of the learning experience and through the emotional experience while learning. At the end of the learning period the student has gained a certain level of competence as a result of the learning behavior which is reinforced (p. 19). Teachers should be concerned about methods that they might use in order to create positive student attitudes, stimulate the students throughout the learning activity, and increase the students' feelings of competence.

Studies have shown that teachers who promote high achievement use positive methods for communicating their expectations (Austin & Garber, 1985, p. 76). Praise should not be used to the extent that it becomes meaningless, but positive feedback may be given in other forms: rephrasing student ideas and referring to them, and providing corrective feedback which criticizes the mistake rather than the student (p. 147).

Many studies of academic excellence in high schools and college stress the importance of the involvement of teachers with their students. Pat Cross says, ". . . the task of the excellent teacher

is to stimulate 'apparently ordinary' people to unusual effort" (Parnell, 1985, p. 7). Tinto (1987) notes that frequent faculty contact seems to be an important element in student persistence (1987, p. 65). Astin also advises faculty members to make an effort to pay more attention to the passive, unmotivated, underprepared students by causing them to become involved in their own learning (1985, p. 151).

Conclusion and Implications for Community Colleges

Community colleges will continue to see the underprepared and unmotivated students. A new report by the AACJC on the role of the community colleges, Building Communities: A Vision for a New Century, urges greater support by community colleges for the disadvantaged, underprepared high school students and others who need basic skills education (Hirschorn, 1988, April 27). The community college is the only type of postsecondary education that is open to all levels of ability, therefore the underprepared students will continue to arrive in community colleges.

What can the community colleges do to cope with the large number of underprepared students? First, instructors must be provided with information about the underprepared students so that they understand that they can expect to spend more time assisting a large number of students who may need help. High involvement of the teacher with the student seems to be an important factor, according to the literature. If teachers provide stimulating courses in a good academic environment, clear goals, and individual attention, some students may become motivated.

In addition, community colleges may want to consider offering a course on study skills for all entering students. A course of this nature may ease the students gently into the college experience while changing the expectations of underprepared students who expect to receive college credit for shoddy work. A "college prep" program at the community colleges which includes remediation, study skills, and motivational strategies for the high risk students may create a positive learning environment that may cause greater retention.

Are there any strategies that may cause students in high schools to become more well-prepared for college? Generally, the literature emphasizes that most high schol students respond to external motivation which may be provided by peers, by school environment, by teachers, and by parents. The ideal solution would be for all high schools to provide a stronger academic program. The academic environment of the school, and the resulting peer influence are strong motivating factors, according to the literature. In addition, all students are motivated by the idea that someone cares. Parents and teachers must put positive pressure on students to do their schoolwork well. The interest shown by a parent or by a teacher may create the positive pressure to transform an unmotivated student into one who is interested in learning.

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